DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 147 CE 071 570

TITLE	Basic Management/Supervision Concepts. MAS-101. Waste Isolation Division (WID). Management and Supervisor Training (MAST) Program.
INSTITUTION	Westinghouse Electric Corp., Carlsbad, NM.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Energy, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	[96]
NOTE	49p.; For related modules, see CE 071 569-588.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Behavioral Objectives; Hazardous Materials; Job Skills; Learning Modules; *Management Development; *Personnel Management; Postsecondary Education; Program Descriptions; *Radiation; Staff Development; Supervision; *Supervisory Methods; *Supervisory Training; Tests; Vocational Education; *Waste Disposal; Wastes
IDENTIFIERS	*Radioactive Wastes

ABSTRACT

This module is part of a set of management and supervisor training (MAST) materials developed by the Department of Energy for the Waste Isolation Division. Its stated purpose is to enable trainees to adjust their behavior to supervise/manage a variety of situations and employee types. The first section of the module is an introduction that includes a terminal objective and opening remarks intended to focus the trainees' attention on the subjects discussed in the module. Most other module sections begin with a list of enabling objectives. Many sections contain "critical incidents" or real-life occurrences at the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant that relate to the section topic. Some illustrate effective management practices, and some illustrate ineffective ones. Each critical incident includes "lessons learned" information. Section topics include the following: recognizing different management styles, supervising/managing different employee types, and managing your boss. A list of "smart moves" is included near the end of the module. Contains 18 references and a practice test. Answers and feedback for the test are provided. (YLB)

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ED 395 147

Waste Isolation Division (WID)
Management and Supervisor Training (MAST) Program

BASIC MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION CONCEPTS MAS-101

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This module was prepared by:

_____ _____
Team Leader, Professional Development — Date

This module was approved by:

_____ _____
Manager, Human Resources Development and Total Quality — Date

_____ _____
Manager, Human Resources — Date

TRAINEE INFORMATION

Trainee Name: _____

Trainee SS#: _____

Date Module Started: _____

Last Possible Date For Completion of Module Examination: _____

CE 021 570

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A. MODULE INTRODUCTION

Terminal Objective

Upon completion of this module, trainees will be able to adjust their behavior to effectively supervise/manage a variety of situations and employee types.

Mastery of the terminal objective will be demonstrated by scoring 80 percent or higher on the module examination.

As a supervisor or manager, you interact with many people while doing your job. If all of them were exactly alike, this module wouldn't be important. But the people you encounter at work aren't exactly the same. They each have their own predominant patterns of behavior. These patterns of behavior are sometimes referred to as "styles."

To be effective as a supervisor or manager, you must work effectively with a variety of people. That's what this module is about - making choices to effectively deal with situations and people in the workplace. We hope you'll use the information in this module. If you do, we're confident you'll enhance your ability to supervise/manage different types of employees and deal with a variety of situations.

B. RECOGNIZING DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT STYLES

Enabling Objectives

Upon completion of this section, the trainee will be able to perform the following:

1. Identify good practices for making style and behavior decisions.
2. Identify practices to avoid when making style and behavior decisions.
3. Given a scenario, evaluate the manager's effectiveness in making style and behavior decisions.

Situations you encounter at work vary. Should you behave the same way in each situation? Probably not. It's possible to adjust your behavior to be more effective without changing who you are.

In this section of the module, we discuss styles that can be effective when dealing with a variety of work situations. Let's begin by talking about the task-oriented style and the employee-oriented style.

Task-Oriented and Employee-Oriented Styles

There are instances when supervisors and managers need to be task-oriented, focusing on tasks more than on employees. A manager who has to complete a project on a tight deadline needs to focus on tasks. That's not the proper time to be getting to know employees better.

There are also instances when a supervisor or manager needs to be employee-oriented, focusing on the well-being and morale of employees. Suppose an employee has just lost funding for a favorite project. The employee's boss needs to help the employee cope with the disappointment.

Supervisors and managers who overuse either style cause problems. Those who overuse the task-oriented style focus on tasks and ignore the well-being of their employees. This causes people problems. Employees become disgruntled and feel little or no loyalty for the boss. In extreme cases, employees hope that the boss will fail and be moved to another position.

Those who overuse the employee-oriented style are popular with employees but not with their boss. They don't produce the results their boss expects. They're too busy worrying about being liked. They usually fail in the long run because the work assigned to them doesn't get done.

Avoid overusing either style, task-oriented or employee-oriented. To be successful, you've got to be able to use both styles when appropriate.

Structuring and Consideration

Which do you spend more time doing - structuring or displaying consideration? Structuring includes things like:

- Explaining tasks
- Giving detailed directions
- Emphasizing the quantity of work to be accomplished within specified time periods
- Maintaining definite standards of work performance
- Answering task-related questions

Consideration is concern for the well-being of employees. Managers display consideration by:

- Expressing appreciation for good work
- Stressing the importance of job satisfaction
- Maintaining and strengthening employees' self-esteem
- Helping employees feel at ease
- Being easy to approach
- Implementing employees' suggestions

- Getting employees' buy-in before proceeding on important matters

Research has shown that when employees perform well, their managers display more consideration. Consideration typically leads to increased employee satisfaction.

When employees do not perform well, managers often display more structuring. Structuring typically does not lead to increased employee satisfaction.

One of the best ways to have a positive impact on the work satisfaction of your employees is to help them learn how to be effective performers. Then look out for their well-being.

Directive and Participative Management

A directive style, where the supervisor or manager tells employees what to do, has sometimes been referred to as the "authoritarian" style. A directive style contributes to order, consistency, and resolution of conflict. Under specific circumstances, a directive style can result in higher productivity, but this effect is usually short-lived.

A participative style, where the supervisor or manager involves employees in planning and decision making, can cause employees to be committed, loyal, involved, and satisfied. A participative style is likely, in the long run, to be more effective than a directive style. Research has shown that, in general, employees are more satisfied working for a participative manager.

When is it appropriate to use a participative style of supervising/managing? You can be less directive and more participative when your employees:

- are ready to assume responsibility and make decisions
- can deal with ambiguity
- are committed to the task and have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities
- understand section, department, and division goals and their part in reaching these goals

Six Style Options

Now let's talk about styles in terms of five behaviors: telling, selling, listening, asking, and problem solving. The six styles we'll discuss were identified by two experts on leadership behavior, P. L. Wright and D. S. Taylor.

Tell

When using the telling style, managers make requests and use directives and strong suggestions. Example:

> Manager: "Next month, I want you to prepare a self-paced training module for team leaders."

For this style to succeed, the manager must have all the facts and employees must be willing to accept the manager's style and do what the manager wants. The telling style allows decisions to be made and actions to be taken quickly.

Two major disadvantages are associated with the telling style. First, useful information and input employees can offer is overlooked. Second, employees who are experienced and competent may resent this style.

Tell and Sell

Managers who use this style tell employees what to do and use explanations and/or persuasion to sell their course of action. Example:

> Manager: "Next month, I want you to prepare a self-paced training module for team leaders. This is important because many team leaders are having a hard time adjusting to their new role and figuring out what to do."

For the tell and sell style to work, the manager's course of action must be right. This style is quick and is more likely to generate employee commitment than simply telling.

Some employees may feel that the selling wastes their time: "If he's already made the decision, why doesn't he just tell me what he wants and let me get started?" Also, employees who are not persuaded by the selling may choose to pursue their own course of action.

Tell and Listen

Managers who use this style use directives, requests, advice, and suggestions along with listening. Example:

> Manager: "Your last self-paced training module really had a positive impact. I'd like you to prepare a module for team leaders. When can you start on it?"
>
> Employee: "As soon as I'm done with..." (as the manager listens)

For the tell and listen approach to work, the manager must be right and the listening must generate sufficient commitment to accept and complete the assignment. An advantage of this style is that it gives an employee an opportunity to voice his or her opinion about assignments. In addition, the listening may generate more commitment. A possible disadvantage is that employees who have voiced reservations about or objections to assignments may not receive a clear message that they're expected to complete the assignments.

Ask and Tell

Managers with this style gather information by asking questions and then tell employees what they want done. Example:

> Manager: "Do you think that a self-paced training module would help team leaders adjust to their new role?"
>
> Employee: "I think so, because many of them are fuzzy about what a team leader should and should not do."
>
> Manager: "I think we should put one together; please make that your next project."

The asking can provide useful information which leads to better decisions. Asking employees can make them feel that their opinions are valued, enhancing their commitment. One disadvantage of the ask and tell style is that action plans may not be accepted by employees whose strongly held views have been overruled by their manager.

Problem Solving

Using this approach, the manager treats employees as coequals, working with them to solve problems. Example:

> Manager: "I've noticed many team leaders are having a hard time adjusting to their new role and figuring out what to do. I'd like your help in identifying how we could help them out."

The problem solving style can lead to high commitment and good decisions, but it's not appropriate when employees are new, inexperienced, or unmotivated. A disadvantage of this style is that it can be slower than some of the more directive styles.

Ask and Listen

This style is appropriate when the manager's primary objective is to gather information but not take action right away. Example:

> Manager: "What are some things we could do to help team leaders be successful in their new role?"
>
> Employee: "I think we..." (as the manager listens)

The ask and listen style can be useful when gathering information well in advance of a decision. It can also prove useful when dealing with emotion-laden issues which need to be brought into the open.

Choose appropriately from among these six styles to deal with situations you encounter. Then use the practices we'll cover next to make the most of your style choice.

Good Practices

- If the time required to involve employees in decision making is more expensive than the value of their contribution, be more directive and less participative
- Remember that it's easier to influence your employees through your behavior than it is to control their behavior

- Minimize confusion and resentment when you change your style

  One way to prevent employees from becoming confused or resentful when your style varies is to inform them beforehand. If you're in a situation where it's necessary to use a more directive style than you usually do, it would be advisable to explain why you find it necessary to change styles. Example: "Richard, under normal circumstances I'd ask you to decide how to accomplish this project. In this instance, though, I made the decision myself. Our customer needed an immediate decision." Most employees will accept reasonable changes in style when they know the reasons for the changes.

- Whatever style you use, be assertive

  Assertive people do not trample others or allow themselves to be trampled. They state their limits, expectations, and feelings in ways that preserve others' self-esteem. Assertiveness is a requirement for successful supervising/managing, regardless of the situation.

- Remember the impact you have on the climate of your organization

  An organization's climate is the prevailing conditions which characterize the organization. Have you noticed the variety of climates that exist within WID? Various WID sections often are radically different from one another in terms of climate. And have you ever witnessed a change of climate in an organization when a new manager was appointed? One of the most important determinants of your organization's climate is you. What kind of climate do you want your organization to have? Open and friendly? Productive and professional? Consider changing your behavior if you want to change the climate of your organization.

- Use techniques that will help you effectively manage inexperienced employees

  - Teach inexperienced employees the basics and then allow them the leeway they need to develop

  - Overcome the impulse to intervene too much in inexperienced employees' work

    Your role is twofold: 1) to protect WID from costly mistakes, and 2) provide guidance and resources so that inexperienced employees can learn to solve problems themselves.

- When mistakes are made, help inexperienced employees learn from these mistakes by discussing causes and lessons learned

- When inexperienced employees come to you with problems, squelch the impulse to solve them

  Instead, try asking "What have you done to resolve it?" This will encourage your employees to use their own resourcefulness to solve problems. It will also discourage what is called "reverse delegation," whereby employees inappropriately return delegated tasks back to you.

- Use techniques that will help you effectively manage experienced employees

  - When experienced employees disagree with you or question a course of action, don't assume that they are challenging your authority

    Experienced employees can be opinionated and outspoken, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're challenging your authority.

  - Get to know your experienced employees

    Learn about the background of your experienced employees. They can help you accomplish your objectives if you incorporate them into your plans as allies.

  - Solicit their advice

    Experienced employees typically resent not being consulted when they possess expertise relevant to something you're working on. Ask for their opinions. Draw upon their experience and knowledge.

- Don't overmanage/oversupervise

  Joseph Raelin, an expert on management of salaried professionals, found close management/supervision "...a corporate practice that is shown to produce considerable strain among professionals who prefer general supervision..." Experienced employees typically resent close supervision. It makes them feel like the boss doubts their competence. So minimize the use of close supervision. Instead, use general supervision. Tell them what end results you want and let them figure out how to make it happen. This approach will almost always be more effective with experienced employees.

- Don't undermanage/undersupervise

  Experienced employees don't want to be told how to do their job, but they do expect you to provide leadership and enforce standards. A hands-off approach, where employees do what they want, won't work well at WID.

- Give experienced employees the kinds of attention they need

  Experienced employees typically need:

  - positive feedback
  - to be familiar with your objectives
  - to know about your vision for your organization
  - your assistance in obtaining resources that will make them more effective
  - information and developmental opportunities required to stay effective in the future

- Use techniques that will help you effectively manage problem employees

  Problem employees shouldn't be treated the same way as other employees. It can be difficult to adapt one's style to effectively manage them. Oftentimes it's hard to understand why problem employees don't perform better, why they don't care more, and why they want to just "slide by" without making much of a contribution.

Like all employees, problem employees should be given feedback. Plan what you will say before giving feedback. And remember that listening is a very important part of feedback sessions. Information you gather by listening will help you choose an effective strategy for supervising/managing problem employees. Talking at or down to problem employees will not work well.

If you're planning to hold a feedback session with a problem employee, prepare for the possibility of conflict. If conflict does arise, here are some tips that may prove helpful:

- If you've made mistakes, admit them

  This does not mean, however, accepting blame for the employee's poor performance.

- Avoid apologizing

  Statements such as "I'm sorry I have to bring this up" detract from your message.

- Avoid placating the problem employee

  Attempting to soothe or appease is an invitation for the employee to manipulate you. So don't say something like, "I'm sure you can do better if you'll only try."

- Don't try to win arguments

  This is counterproductive, and you probably won't convince the employee that you are right and he or she is wrong. Instead, listen to the employee, show that you understand what was said, and then refocus on what you want to accomplish in the feedback session.

Don't let the possibility of conflict cause you to unnecessarily delay giving feedback or taking appropriate action. This is a common mistake. Allowing problem employees to continue causing problems is bad for everyone who has to deal with them. By taking appropriate action, you can improve the situation.

More information about how to provide useful feedback can be found in MAS-106, *Communications*, and MAS-111, *Personnel Development*. Information on how to respond to performance problems can be found in MAS-112, *Administrative Requirements*.

Practices to Avoid

- Being a chameleon

  We don't advocate being a chameleon, the lizard that has the ability to change the color of its skin. If you change your behavior too much, it can provoke suspicion and undermine your credibility. Adapting a few of your behaviors to interact effectively with someone is not the same as masking your basic personality. Make slight, useful alterations to your behavior when advantageous; otherwise, be yourself.

- Spending a lot of time doing the same work as your employees

  Your group will be more productive if you supervise/manage your group's work rather than doing the work yourself. Your time can be better spent on coordinating and planning activities.

- Equating changing your behavior with being phony

  Altering your behavior to relate better with others isn't phoniness. Phoniness is intended to deceive or mislead.

- Using a telling style to avoid losing control

  Some managers feel that if they aren't making the decisions and telling employees what to do, they're not in control. Overusing the telling style, however, is counterproductive. A better way to control your organization is to learn all you can about your employees. Then use this knowledge to supervise/manage them in ways that work. Don't overuse the telling style.

- Using a participative style when you really have your mind set on a particular solution

  Don't put on a false participatory front and try to lead employees toward a predetermined solution. They will probably realize what you're doing and resent it.

- Forgetting that your style choices and behavior have an impact on your employees' motivation

  Research has shown that the kind of boss someone works for affects his or her own job behavior - positively or negatively.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Occurrence: A manager was successful with one group of employees. Then the manager was assigned another group of employees. These employees were different in background than the manager's other employees, and they were used to a different management style. The manager treated this group the same way he treated his other group.

Impact: The results, as described by one of the manager's peers, were "fireworks, hate, and discontent."

Lessons learned: 1) It's usually not a good practice to treat everyone the same. 2) Failing to recognize how employees differ and make appropriate adjustments causes problems.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Occurrence: The manager described in the last incident realized his approach wasn't working. He began learning more about the employees. He found out what worked with them and what didn't. He then applied what he had learned and changed his behavior to manage them more effectively.

Impacts: 1) The fireworks, hate, and discontent have ended. 2) The manager is building solid working relationships with the employees.

Lessons learned: 1) It's never too late to change. 2) Supervisors and managers who are willing to learn what works with employees and apply this knowledge can succeed in a variety of work settings.

C. SUPERVISING/MANAGING DIFFERENT EMPLOYEE TYPES

Enabling Objectives

Upon completion of this section, the trainee will be able to perform the following:

1. Identify good practices to follow in supervising/managing different employee types.
2. Identify practices to avoid in supervising/managing different employee types.
3. Given a scenario, evaluate the manager's effectiveness in managing different employee types.

Each of your employees is a unique individual. Nonetheless, your employees do have characteristic preferences and behaviors that make them similar to other people. These similarities can be used to group employees into type categories, or "types." In this module, we'll discuss four types: Analytical, Amiable, Expressive, and Driver. These four types were first described by two industrial psychologists, David Merrill and Roger Reid. Let's become familiar with each of them.

Analytical

People classified as Analyticals generally:

- have a high level of emotional control
- have a low level of assertiveness
- work precisely and deliberately
- gather and analyze much information before taking action

Analyticals are often described as:

- logical
- thorough
- serious

- systematic
- prudent

Famous Analyticals include:

- Jimmy Carter
- Albert Einstein
- Woodrow Wilson
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Thomas Jefferson

If Analyticals overextend their strengths, they can become nit-picking and inflexible. When under stress, Analyticals tend to:

- avoid unpleasant situations
- discuss emotional issues distantly and logically
- be uncomfortable and feel flustered when emotions run high

Here are some things you can do to effectively supervise/manage Analyticals:

- Help them learn how to deal with more emotional colleagues

  Analyticals often try to engage in problem solving or logical discussion before more emotional colleagues have adequately vented emotions.

- Encourage them to make decisions in a timely manner

  Analyticals enjoy identifying as many alternatives as possible and weighing each one before making decisions. Sometimes this approach is too time consuming. If one of your Analytical employees takes too long to make a decision, resist the impulse to make the decision yourself. Instead, tell the employee when you need his or her decision. Provide positive feedback to Analyticals when they make decisions and take action expeditiously.

- Keep interactions moderately paced

  Analyticals don't like activities to be conducted at either a leisurely or frenzied pace.

- When problem solving, be factual

  Exaggerating is a quick way to exasperate Analyticals.

- When possible, allow Analyticals to proceed at their own careful, deliberate pace

Amiable

People classified as Amiables typically:

- have a low level of assertiveness
- are sensitive to the needs of others
- have an ability to look past someone's behavior and understand how the person is feeling
- have a high level of empathy
- have higher than average responsiveness

  "Responsiveness" is the degree to which a person responds to other people. For example, when someone is upset, an Amiable employee is likely to respond sympathetically.

Amiables are often described as:

- cooperative
- supportive
- diplomatic
- patient
- loyal

Well-known Amiables include:

- Gerald Ford
- John Denver
- Dwight Eisenhower
- Mary Tyler Moore
- Robert E. Lee

If Amiables overextend their strengths, they can become overly conforming and permissive. When experiencing a lot of stress, Amiables tend to:

- comply passively
- agree to do things without really intending to follow through

Here are some things you can do to effectively supervise/manage Amiables:

- Encourage Amiables not to dodge emotionally charged issues

  Books on assertiveness and conflict management can help.

- Elicit their opinion

  Because Amiables tend to be diplomatic, it may take a little effort to find out what they really think.

- Alert Amiables when their slow-paced, people-oriented approach is not appropriate for an assignment
- Try to speak with them when you are not upset or unusually stressed

  Amiables are likely to read your mood and be affected by it.

- Be patient

  This can be difficult if you tend to be someone with a strong sense of urgency, because Amiables often preface what they have to say with friendly small talk.

- Treat their opinions and reservations with care

  If you are too quick to judge or analyze, Amiables may be hesitant to be forthcoming with you in the future.

- Offer your assistance on delegated assignments

  Amiables may not come to you when they encounter barriers, so periodically check on their progress on assignments.

Expressive

People classified as Expressive generally:

- are flamboyant

- are highly assertive
- are emotionally expressive
- focus on the big picture
- are innovative
- are willing to take risks
- are able to charm, persuade, and motivate others
- decide and take action quickly

Expressives are often described as:

- outgoing
- enthusiastic
- persuasive
- fun loving
- spontaneous

Famous Expressives include:

- Liza Minnelli
- Winston Churchill
- Muhammad Ali
- Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Pablo Picasso

If they overextend their strengths, Expressives can become overbearing and unrealistic. When in their stress mode, Expressives may:

- express anger
- launch personal attacks
- use profanity
- become loud

- gesture emphatically

Here are some things you can do to effectively supervise/manage Expressives:

- Give Expressives constructive feedback when they don't appropriately control their emotions

  Wait until they're calm and receptive. Then your feedback is more likely to be accepted and have a positive effect.

- Give them high visibility assignments

  Expressives like to "see and be seen."

- Show them the value of sharing the limelight with co-workers

- Ensure that they gather relevant facts and avoid impulsiveness when making decisions

- Communicate with them at their own pace

  Expressives usually communicate at a brisk pace.

- Adapt to their behavior, which tends to be upbeat and energetic

- Be aware that many Expressives like arguing

  Listen while they are arguing their point, but keep the discussion on track.

- Show them how assignments fit into the "big picture"

Driver

People classified as Drivers generally are:

- highly assertive
- task-oriented
- direct in their speech
- competitive
- known for their ability to get things done

Drivers are often described as:

- independent
- candid
- decisive
- pragmatic
- efficient

Famous drivers include:

- Henry Ford I
- Barbara Walters
- Malcolm X
- Charles Lindbergh
- Mike Wallace

If they overextend their strengths, drivers can seem domineering and unfeeling. When under a lot of stress, drivers typically:

- become pushy
- exercise overbearing control
- insist that things be done their way immediately

Here are some things you can do to effectively supervise/manage Drivers:

- Let them know when their typically full speed ahead approach is unnecessary
- Coach them on how to listen and make the most of other people's knowledge
- Ensure that they put sufficient thought into important decisions
- Adjust to their dynamic, businesslike style
- When speaking with Drivers, get to the point and don't waste their time

Now that we've described four general types of employees, let's discuss good practices and practices to avoid when adjusting to employee types.

Good Practices

- Take type into account when communicating

  Robert and Dorothy Bolton, experts on style, use an example of a Driver who altered his behavior to communicate more effectively with an Amiable: the Driver "...decided to alter his usual behavior in three ways. He consciously spoke more slowly and left more periods of silence in the conversation. He invited the Amiable to state his opinions while he himself refrained from judging any part of what the Amiable said until he fully understood the whole idea. Finally, the Driver stated his opinions less forcefully than usual. According to the Driver who described the interaction to us, those few changes in behavior contributed to the most productive interchange he had ever had with the Amiable peer..."

- Realize that some people do not fit cleanly into a type category (Analytical, Amiable, Expressive, Driver)

  Not everyone fits one of the four type categories. When you have a hard time determining peoples' type, don't force them into a category. Instead, concentrate on discovering what behaviors work and don't work with them. Continue to refine your techniques for dealing with them as you learn more.

- Watch for signs of stress in others

  Most of us can detect when co-workers are under stress. If you know their type, you can predict many of the behaviors they will use when under stress. This is because each of the four types we have discussed also has a set of characteristic stress behaviors. The shift from normal to stress behavior is unconscious. For instance, normally assertive people can become aggressive. Stress behaviors are usually counterproductive for those using them.

  If a co-worker appears to be under stress, here are some adaptations you can make to respond appropriately:

- Determine if alterations to your behavior might reduce the co-worker's stress

  For instance, an Expressive, while talking emotionally about a problem, notices that an Analytical seems stressed. This could be because Analyticals typically value facts more than emotions. It may be productive for the Expressive to focus on the facts associated with the problem. Then the Analytical can begin to solve the problem and reduce his or her stress level.

- Don't take co-workers' stress behavior personally

  Taking someone's stress behavior personally will only exacerbate an already difficult situation. Stay assertive and don't get "sucked in" by someone's stress-induced behavior. Keep a cool head. Remember: there may be stressful things going on in the person's life that have nothing to do with you.

- Don't try to suppress someone else's stress behavior

  For instance, telling an upset Expressive to "Calm down; you need to get control of yourself" will probably only make matters worse. Use your listening skills and allow people to vent their emotions as needed. If you want someone to change how they behave in stressful situations, wait until later when a calm discussion is possible.

- If all else fails, find a tactful way of postponing interactions with persons who are in their stress mode

  There are times when someone needs to be alone. Saying something like "I need to go; let's talk about this later" may be appropriate.

Practices to Avoid

- Making quick judgements about someone's type

  Your first impression of someone may not give you an accurate understanding of his or her type. For example, an Analytical with strong interpersonal skills could be mistaken for an Amiable. If you make snap judgements about someone's type, you can go seriously astray.

- Speaking slightingly about someone's type

  Don't devalue anyone's type; all types have their own particular strengths and weaknesses. An organization where everyone was of the same type would be a disaster.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Occurrence: A manager hired an employee. The manager managed the employee the same way he managed his other employees. This didn't work. The employee was an Analytical, different from the manager's other employees. The employee began to think she'd made a mistake in accepting the job. Then the manager recognized his approach wasn't working with the employee. The manager learned about the employee's interests, strengths, and stressors. He began assigning tasks befitting an analytical approach to the employee. When possible, the manager allowed the employee to work deliberately, and usually without much direction.

Impacts: 1) The employee produced high-quality work for the manager. 2) The employee was satisfied with her job and loyal to the manager.

Lesson learned: Supervisors and managers need to recognize the different types of employees they have working for them and supervise/manage them appropriately.

D. MANAGING YOUR BOSS

Enabling Objectives

Upon completion of this section, the trainee will be able to perform the following:

1. Identify good practices for managing a boss.
2. Identify practices to avoid when managing a boss.
3. Given a scenario, evaluate the manager's effectiveness in managing his or her boss.

Management professors John Gabarro and John Kotter defined managing your boss as "...the process of consciously working with your superior to obtain the best possible results for you, your boss, and the company." Managing your boss is of paramount importance because:

- Research indicates that your relationship with your boss has a bigger impact on your attitude toward your job than anything else
- Poor relations between you and your boss can have a negative effect on the performance of your employees

It's important to understand that your actions can and do influence your boss's behaviors. And your boss's behaviors influence your actions. You and your boss are in a behavioral loop, each influencing the other. The easiest way to change the pattern of interaction with your boss is to change your own behavior. Kotter and Gabarro suggest that each of us should "...become aware of what it is about you that impedes or facilitates working with your boss and, with that awareness, take actions that make the relationship more effective."

Self-knowledge is important for working with a boss; it provides an understanding of one's strengths and areas for development. When we know our strengths we can use them to help our boss. Knowing our areas for development help us avoid situations and behavior that will be detrimental to us and our boss. You'll have an opportunity to improve your self-knowledge when you complete MAS-102, *Self-Assessment*.

Knowing your boss's needs, behavior, and personality is vital to your success. The more you know about your boss, the better you will be able to empathize with your boss. You need to understand your boss's goals, pressures, strengths, and areas for development. This helps you and your boss to avoid unnecessary conflicts, misunderstandings, and difficulties. Kotter and Gabarro recommend that you learn the answers to the following questions:

- What are your boss's organizational and personal objectives?
- What are the pressures on your boss?

  Pressures exerted by your boss's boss and his or her peers can be especially relevant.
- What are the activities or qualities in which your boss excels?
- What are your boss's blind spots?
- What is his or her preferred style of working?
- Does he or she like to get information through memos, face-to-face meetings, or telephone calls?
- Does your boss thrive on conflict or try to minimize it?

The answers to these questions will help you manage your relationship with your boss. And this is important because you and your boss are mutually interdependent.

Adjusting to Bosses

We've already discussed the advantages of adjusting your behavior to work effectively with others. This works well with bosses, too. Let's discuss ways you might adjust to two types of bosses, "the administrator" and "the analytical."

The Administrator

The administrator is generally pleasant and mild mannered, but is slow and cautious in making decisions. When presented with a problem or suggestion, his or her usual response is to consult management directives, policies, or procedures. This type of boss is often more concerned with how you go about a task than he or she is about the outcome. Acting in concert with other organizations is very important to the administrator. The administrator's style demotivates creative employees and those with a lot of initiative.

Here are some strategies that may help in coping with the administrator:

- Don't expect quick responses

  With this type of boss, patience is not only a virtue, it's also a valuable coping strategy. Impatience will only cause you unnecessary stress.

- Become fully familiar with management directives, policies, and procedures

  This will enable you to present your ideas as being in accordance with management directives, policies, and procedures. Your ideas will then be more likely to meet with the administrator's approval.

- Take responsibility for risk

  Protect the administrator from the risk of being associated with a failure. This may help you to get permission to implement new ideas.

- When selling the administrator on new ideas, tie them to similar ideas that were successful

  According to Stanley Bing, author of *Crazy Bosses*, this "...means taking your innovative proposals and coming up with things that have existed before that bore some similarity to them, things that succeeded and brought glory to the boss who okayed them."

- Do nothing

  You may decide it's not worthwhile to try to change a less than satisfactory working relationship with the administrator. This may be a legitimate choice if he or she is rigidly set in his or her ways or not inclined to change for your sake.

  But don't take the do nothing approach unless you are relatively certain the administrator is unlikely to change. Trusted co-workers may be able to offer you some insight as to the expected results of change efforts.

  If you choose to do nothing, don't complain about the situation to others. Adopt attitudes that will preserve your emotional equilibrium. For example, you can tell yourself things like "I won't be working for this person forever" and "I'm going to learn what I can from this boss." Then live with the situation gracefully or search for another position.

The Analytical

Now let's look at how one might adapt one's style to a different type of boss, the analytical. Here we're referring to a boss who fits the Analytical type category described previously.

Here are some coping strategies that may help in managing an analytical boss:

- Consult with an analytical peer when you want to predict how the boss may react to an idea or request

- Keep informal comments brief unless the analytical prolongs an informal discussion

- Do your homework before making requests

  Make sure you can present logical reasons why the analytical should give consent to your requests.

- Avoid talking too much or exaggerating

  These behaviors are certain to displease an analytical boss.

There are many other types of bosses besides the administrator and the analytical. The tips included below will help you manage your boss, whatever his or her style.

Good Practices

- Find out what your boss's expectations are

  Some bosses are not explicit about their expectations. Figure out a way to get the information you need to succeed in your job. You may be able to get this information directly from your boss. In other cases, you can get this information from others who have worked for your boss.

- Communicate your expectations to your boss

  There's a good chance that your boss won't meet your expectations if he or she is unaware of them. Example: a manager places a high value on receiving feedback when he doesn't meet his boss's expectations. This manager could make it clear to his boss that he values feedback and that he will assume he is performing as expected unless his boss tells him otherwise.

- When problems arise between you and your boss, consider discussing them

  Some problems can be resolved by bringing them to your boss's attention and discussing them maturely and assertively. If you're not sure how to discuss a problem with your boss, consider seeking advice from a respected peer, friend, or Employee Assistance Program counsellor.

- Stay aware of your boss's goals, problems, and pressures

  Conditions affecting your boss can change rapidly. Pay attention to these conditions so that you can provide the support your boss needs from you.

- Analyze less than satisfactory interactions with your boss

  The following questions can help:

  - Did your behavior encourage your boss's undesirable behavior?
  - Was your boss preoccupied with other matters?
  - Did the interaction have any similarities with other unsatisfactory interactions you've had with your boss?
  - Did you fall back on instinctive behaviors that don't work well with your boss?

- Have peers or coworkers experienced more success in similar interactions?

  If so, what are their strategies?

- What would have worked better?

- Provide your boss with as complete a product or service as possible

  If your boss requests some numerical information, ask yourself whether a graph depicting the information could prove useful. If your boss asks for a letter, attempt to provide a letter your boss can sign right there (without revision).

- Think from your boss's perspective occasionally

  What would your wants and needs be if you were in his or her position? Putting yourself in your boss's shoes will help you anticipate his or her needs.

- Concentrate on your performance and the products and services you provide to your boss

  When people spend a lot of time thinking about the past, future, or the next job they desire, their performance suffers. The best way to be successful at WID is to aim for outstanding performance.

- If your boss is moody, use timing to your advantage

  Be observant and learn to read your boss's moods. Approach your boss with requests or new ideas when he or she is in a receptive mood.

- Be selective in raising concerns with your boss

  This advice is very similar to the lesson learned by the boy who cried "wolf" in the fable. Approaching the boss frequently with problems and complaints can decrease his or her effectiveness. It may also cause the boss to take concerns less seriously than if one were more selective. Treat a boss's time like the scarce resource that it is and approach him or her with truly important concerns.

- Support your boss

  Bosses (like you) are subject to stressful, unpleasant, and exasperating experiences. Empathize with your boss and provide assistance when you can.

- Be a good follower

  Good followers are active, independent, critical thinkers who can manage themselves. To be a good follower:

  - Commit to the division and to persons, principles, or purposes beyond yourself
  - Align some of your personal goals with the goals of the division
  - Perform your job competently
  - Stay abreast of current developments in your field
  - Be a credible source of information
  - Learn how to move easily into the leadership role and return again to the role of follower

- Manage problems effectively

  Bosses appreciate creative problem solvers. Do what you can to solve problems before you turn to your boss for help.

- If an impediment turns out to be insurmountable, inform your boss promptly

  If you delay informing your boss, the window of opportunity for overcoming the impediment may close. Informing your boss as soon as possible helps prevent the impediment from escalating into a panic situation.

- Use good problem solving strategies with your boss

  When solving problems, don't make pleasing the boss your primary aim. Instead, focus on reaching the best solutions to problems. Your boss benefits from hearing your reasoning and opinion, so don't try to say what you think he or she wants to hear. Those who behave like servile self-seeking flatterers cheat themselves and their bosses.

- Always get back (respond appropriately) to your boss

  If your boss asks you about something, provide an answer. Don't assume that your boss has forgotten something, even if he or she hasn't made any recent inquiries.

- Minimize the number of times your boss is surprised

  Keep your boss informed about key issues within your area of responsibility. Your boss needs to be able to answer questions asked by his or her boss and by Department of Energy personnel. Anticipate questions your boss may be asked. Then provide information your boss will need to answer these questions.

- Plan for important interactions with your boss

  How can you present what you want to say clearly and concisely? How can you present it without threatening your boss or invoking his or her stress response? Thinking through important interactions before they take place will help you to communicate effectively.

- Disagree agreeably

  George Washington advised, "Strive not with your superiors in argument." If you have a difference of opinion with your boss, keep things as objective and amicable as possible. This will help keep the discussion productive. Consider giving in if a disagreement arises over something unimportant. We can't always have things our way.

- Know when to communicate privately

  Embarrassing or criticizing a boss (or anyone else) in front of others should be avoided. Think before you speak and identify issues that should be discussed in privacy. And bear in mind that even private discussions go better when conducted in an assertive manner.

- Remember that bosses, like other people, respond to reinforcers

  A "reinforcer" is something that increases the probability of a desired response. Praise and feedback can serve as reinforcers. Bosses do appreciate hearing things like "thank you" and "I thought you handled that situation very well."

- If you're not sure what your boss wants, ask

  Guessing about what your boss wants can be risky. If your boss isn't available to provide an answer, apply lessons learned from working with your boss in the past.

- When possible, give your boss an opportunity to see products in the developmental stage

  It could be a big setback if your boss isn't satisfied with a product he or she hasn't seen until the final version has been completed.

- Listen to your boss

  It's impossible to be a good communicator if you don't listen effectively. You can learn a lot by carefully listening to your boss. Take some time to review the listening tips contained in MAS-106, *Communications*.

- Work well with others

  Interpersonal skills are as important as technical skills. Poor interpersonal skills thwart teamwork and lead to misunderstandings and resentment. And these are some of the hardest problems for bosses to solve.

- Be willing to stretch your capabilities

  Bosses tend to rely on those who are willing to take on more responsibility. Offer to take "stretch" assignments periodically. You'll expand your skills and add value to your group.

- Learn to perform with less and less oversight from your boss

  You can do this by continuously improving how well you perform your job. This will increase your autonomy and free up time that your boss otherwise would have expended monitoring your work.

- Give your boss feedback

  Give your boss feedback when it will enhance his or her effectiveness. Even bosses at the general and senior manager level appreciate useful feedback presented to them in an acceptable manner.

- Speak up before decisions are made; provide support after decisions are made

  As one senior manager put it, "Speak your mind, but know when to salute."

- Look at your work with a critical eye before you give it to your boss

  By critiquing your work, you can provide your boss with a higher quality product or service. Think about the "what ifs" related to your work. And think about the recipients or end users of your work. How do they use your work? What do they need from you?

Practices to Avoid

- Forgetting to be sensitive to your boss's style

  In the rush to get things done, it's easy to fall back on preferred ways of doing things. But it's usually a mistake to ignore your boss's style. This is especially true when you need help or resources from your boss. Being sensitive to your boss's style and making appropriate adjustments to your behavior could help you get what you need.

- Trying to change your boss's style

  This will prove to be a waste of your time. The best you can hope for is to change specific behaviors.

- Bemoaning a new boss (who is a different type than your old boss)

  Exposure to different types of bosses is beneficial if you learn from them. Complaining about a new boss is counterproductive; learn to work successfully with the new boss.

- Holding an unrealistic view of your boss

  Bosses are neither all-knowing saints or evil dictators. Remember that your boss is human, which means that he or she is imperfect and fallible (like you). By keeping a realistic view of your boss, you can avoid being either unnecessarily resistant or overly compliant.

- Assuming (without good reason) that your boss's actions are the result of bad intentions

  It's usually best to give your boss the benefit of the doubt. Isn't that what you want your boss to do for you?

- Being overly critical of your boss

  For example, if your boss makes what you believe is a poor decision, consider the possibility that the decision was based on information that you don't have.

- Being a source of conflict

  Your boss encounters more than enough conflict in the normal course of business. Resolve conflict constructively and promote teamwork.

- Expecting your boss to keep you informed about everything

  Bosses are bombarded by just as many, and probably more, distractions as you. This may prevent your boss from keeping you as fully informed as you'd like to be. So develop alternate sources of information that will supplement what you learn from your boss. If you're concerned about a specific issue, ask. Don't assume that, just because you haven't heard anything, no action has been taken or that your boss doesn't care.

- Underestimating what the boss needs to know

  When projects are delegated, delegatees sometimes assume they alone need to know the status of the projects. Don't make this mistaken assumption. Keep your boss up-to-date on the status of projects within his or her section/department.

- Being undependable

  Your boss needs to be able to rely on you. Avoid making overly optimistic commitments that can't be met. Both the quality and the timeliness of your work are important.

- Being less than completely honest

  Your boss can't work effectively with you unless he or she trusts you. Protect the trust your boss has in you by being honest and forthright.

- Using up your boss's time on issues or problems you can resolve yourself

  Your boss's time is a valuable resource that can be squandered through overuse. Be selective about seeking assistance from your boss.

- Being disloyal to your boss

  Every boss expects loyalty. Criticizing or complaining about your boss to others without trying to resolve differences one-on-one with your boss is disloyalty. Bosses don't trust disloyal employees.

  This doesn't mean that you should agree with everything your boss says and does. It also doesn't mean you should cover for a boss who's engaged in unethical practices. What we mean is that you should be assertive, considerate, and loyal. Some people use the rule that they won't say anything about someone that they wouldn't say directly to that person. It seems like a good rule to adopt for boss-employee working relationships, too.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Occurrence: An event to honor a group of employees had been held annually for the past five years. A manager assumed that it was OK to schedule the event again without first checking with his boss. The manager's boss heard about the event after it had been scheduled and announced to employees.

Impact: The manager's boss, who was privy to information that made holding the event inappropriate, was displeased when he heard about the event. Because it was too late to cancel the event without damaging employee morale, the event was held.

Lesson learned: It's important to know when to consult with your boss before making commitments.

CRITICAL INCIDENT
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Occurrence: A manager made a concerted effort to learn how to work effectively with his boss. One of things that works best for the manager is empathy. The manager tries to treat his boss how he'd like to be treated.

Impact: The manager is being mentored and groomed for the boss's position. The boss said "When I'm away from the facility, I feel completely confident leaving the operation in this employee's hands."

Lesson learned: Managing your boss works.

E. SMART MOVES - WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Here are some things you can do now to make your section/department more effective:

- Spend more time on coordinating and planning activities and less time on work that could be performed by your employees (*page 14*).
- Express appreciation for employees' good work and get their buy-in before proceeding on important matters (*pages 5 and 6*).
- Be assertive to meet your needs without trampling on others (*page 10*).
- To change the climate of your organization, change your behavior (*page 10*).
- Make slight, useful alterations to your behavior to relate better with others; otherwise, be yourself (*page 14*).
- Recognize how your employees differ and supervise/manage them appropriately (*page 15*).
- Stay aware of conditions affecting your boss and provide the support he or she needs from you (*page 30*).
- Be a good follower (*page 32*).
- Know when to communicate privately (*page 33*).
- Speak up before decisions are made; provide support after decisions are made (*page 35*).

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G. PRACTICE TEST

1. A manager was reassigned to a new boss. The manager wasn't sure what her boss expected. The manager asked the boss, "What do you need from me and what are your expectations?" but received general answers. The manager decided to talk to people who had previously worked for her boss. The manager gathered information about the boss's "hot buttons," expectations, and preferences. Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - it's a good practice to find out what your boss's expectations are - even if you have to get some of this information from others

   b. YES - bosses usually aren't a good source of information about their expectations; it's best to ask people who have previously worked for them

   c. NO - managers should figure out what their boss expects through trial and error

   d. NO - talking to people who had previously worked for the manager is likely to get the manager into trouble; such information gathering is usually perceived as a form of office politics

   (D.3)

2. While working on an important project, a manager ran into a problem that prevented finishing the project. He tried to solve the problem but was unable to do so. As soon as the manager realized he couldn't solve the problem, he informed his boss. Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - bosses should be notified whenever one runs into any problem on the job

   b. YES - this will help prevent the problem and the project from escalating into a panic situation

   c. NO - the manager was notifying the boss too soon; bosses usually don't like to be notified about problems until the problems have become emergencies

   d. NO - when the problem was first encountered, the manager should have returned the project back to the boss

   (D.3)

3. A manager was involved in a situation where decisions had to be made and actions needed to be taken quickly. The manager made requests and used directives and strong suggestions to manage the situation. Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - the manager was using the telling style, which can be useful in these kinds of situations

   b. YES - the manager was using the telling style, which has been proven to be the best way to manage experienced and competent employees

   c. NO - the ask and listen style would have been better in this situation because it is the best style to use when one wants to take action quickly

   d. NO - other than in dire emergencies, and life and death situations, managers should not use directives or strong suggestions

   (B.3)

4. A manager was assigned to manage a new group of employees. The employees in the new group were different in background and used to a different management style than the manager's previous employees. The manager treated this group the same way he had treated his previous group. Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - once a manager has developed a predominant style, this style should be used whatever the circumstances encountered

   b. YES - it's usually a good practice to treat everyone the same

   c. NO - the manager should have radically changed his basic style to fit the new group of employees

   d. NO - treating the new group the same way without making appropriate adjustments is likely to cause the manager problems

   (B.3)

5. An Amiable stopped by a Driver's office to ask for assistance on a project. Before stating the reason for her visit, the Amiable talked at length about what she had done over the weekend. When she noticed the Driver looking at his "to do" list, the Amiable asked, "How was your weekend?" Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - it's always a good idea to begin business conversations with relaxed small talk

   b. YES - Drivers typically feel uncomfortable when people get to the point in conversations

   c. NO - the Amiable wasn't adjusting to the Driver's style; Drivers typically want people to get to the point and not waste their time

   d. NO - the Amiable wasn't adjusting to the Driver's style; the best approach would have been to engage the Driver in a lengthy discussion of alternative ways to finish the project and the pros and cons of each alternative

   (C.3)

6. A manager hired a new employee. The manager managed the employee the same as his other employees. This didn't work. The manager recognized that something wasn't working, so he learned about the employee's interests, strengths, and stressors. The manager then used this knowledge and changed the way he managed the employee. Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - managers should undertake efforts to change or mask their basic personality when their style isn't working

   b. YES - by learning about the employee's interests, strengths, and stressors and applying this knowledge, the manager is likely to be more successful in managing the employee

   c. NO - the manager was "catering" to the employee; the employee should have been told to conform

   d. NO - the manager was apparently saddled with a poor boss-employee match; the manager should have found another manager who wanted the employee

   (C.3)

7. A manager and his boss were discussing a project plan the boss had produced. The manager knew about drawbacks associated with the plan, but chose to say nothing to keep his boss a "happy camper." Was the manager's decision a good one? Why?

   a. YES - pleasing the boss should be one's primary aim

   b. YES - it's best to try to say what the boss wants to hear and avoid pointing out drawbacks with the boss's plans

   c. NO - the manager should have told his boss that the plan would never work in front of others so they could witness that he had advised against the plan

   d. NO - the manager should have offered the boss his thoughts on the plan in a helpful manner

   (D.3)

8. A manager asked his boss for help with a problem. Several weeks went by and the manager heard nothing from his boss about what had been done to resolve the problem. The manager asked his boss, "Have you had a chance to look into that problem we talked about?" Was this a good practice? Why?

   a. YES - it's better to ask than to assume that no action has been taken or that the boss doesn't care

   b. YES - the manager had to ask because the boss had neglected a basic management responsibility - keeping employees informed about everything

   c. NO - once a boss is asked for help, the boss shouldn't be asked about the same problem again

   d. NO - the manager should have let the problem drop; it's obvious his boss didn't care about the problem

   (D.3)

9. A manager said, "A directive style, where one tells employees what to do, is likely, in the long run, to be more effective than a participative style." Was the manager correct? Why?

   a. YES - research has shown that a directive style is usually more effective in the long run

   b. YES - research has shown that employees don't perform as well for participative bosses because they feel that no one is clearly in control

   c. NO - a participative style is likely, in the long run, to be more effective than a directive style

   (B.3)

10. During a feedback session with a problem employee, a manager said, "I may be partly to blame for your poor performance, but that still doesn't excuse it." Was the manager following good practices for providing feedback to problem employees? Why?

a. YES - managers are always partly to blame for employees' poor performance

b. YES - placating the employee in this way is a good practice to follow when providing unpleasant feedback

c. NO - managers should not admit their mistakes

d. NO - holding feedback sessions with problem employees is a waste of time; feedback should be reserved for average and better performers

e. NO - managers should admit to mistakes they've made, but they should not accept blame for employees' poor performance

(B.3)

H. ANSWERS AND FEEDBACK FOR THE PRACTICE TEST

1. a. YES - it's a good practice to find out what your boss's expectations are - even if you have to get some of this information from others

2. b. YES - this will help prevent the problem and the project from escalating into a panic situation

3. a. YES - the manager was using the telling style, which can be useful in these kinds of situations

4. d. NO - treating the new group the same way without making appropriate adjustments is likely to cause the manager problems

5. c. NO - the Amiable wasn't adjusting to the Driver's style; Drivers typically want people to get to the point and not waste their time

6. b. YES - by learning about the employee's interests, strengths, and stressors and applying this knowledge, the manager is likely to be more successful in managing the employee

7. d. NO - the manager should have offered the boss his thoughts on the plan in a helpful manner

8. a. YES - it's better to ask than to assume that no action has been taken or that the boss doesn't care

9. c. NO - a participative style is likely, in the long run, to be more effective than a directive style

10. e. NO - managers should admit to mistakes they've made, but they should not accept blame for employees' poor performance

If you scored 80 percent or higher on the practice test, you are ready to take the module examination; please proceed to Human Resources Development and Total Quality.

If you scored less than 80 percent on the practice test, please re-read the module and take the practice test again. If you still have questions, contact the Team Leader, Professional Development, or the Manager, Human Resources Development and Total Quality.